

PROVIDENCE, R.I.  
JOURNAL

CPYRIGHT

M-63,635  
S-194,795

MAY 10 1966

CPYRIGHT

CPYRIGHT

# Optimism Voiced on Viet Nam

By DOUGLAS C. WILSON

A former executive director of the Central Intelligence Agency said yesterday that he believes the tide of the war in Viet Nam "has turned very much in favor of a possible solution."

Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Jr., the CIA official who left his post a year ago to join the political science faculty at Brown University, said in an interview here that he views the past year of developments in Southeast Asia with guarded optimism.

At the same time, he rejected the arguments of administration critics in a point-by-point review of the Vietnamese war.

Mr. Kirkpatrick said he thinks the chances for a settlement have improved greatly since May, 1965.

"A year ago today, Viet Nam was practically down the drain. The war was practically lost," he said. But today, as a result of stepped-up military efforts, "Hanoi must be hurting more and more," he said, and if this keeps up, the Communists may decide to "call it off and resort to other tactics."

The "tactics" could take the form of negotiation, he indicated.

In the meantime, "we must

keep on trying to clear the country of the Viet Cong military cadres and help the building of a democratic society and an economy that will support it, while at the same time carrying on our peace offensive as quietly as we can."

Mr. Kirkpatrick said it is crucial that elections be held in South Viet Nam next fall, and he hopes "the ultimate results will be the establishment of a fairly representative government."

He discounted the fear expressed by U.S. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge that Viet Cong terrorism might ruin the plans for an election.

"The Viet Cong last year threatened to prevent municipal elections, and yet the elections were held with few incidents," he said. "I think an election has meaning and I feel very strongly that it should be held. It would be a great mistake to postpone or forestall them."

He added, however, that it is not surprising to hear reports that Premier Nguyen Cao Ky plans to screen the list of candidates before the election. Mr. Kirkpatrick said South Vietnamese officials have a hard time keeping tabs on subversive elements in the population.

"There isn't the population control that exists in more ad-



Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Jr.

vanced countries," he said. "The consequence is that there are Communist agitators around, and some of them may well turn out to be candidates and get into the body politic."

The former CIA executive took issue with the arguments of those who criticize American involvement in Southeast Asia.

"They talk about the United States getting out and very seldom talk about the increasing invasion from the north," he said. If we abandon South Viet Nam, "it would erupt into an even more violent situation than exists there today." Also, "if we pull out now, there's not going to be any people in Asia or any other part of the world who can count on our reliability when they're in danger."

Critics who say the war is a civil war and not a case of outside aggression "also overlook

how this all started," Mr. Kirkpatrick said.

The argument that the conflict is a civil war must be based on the shaky assumption that Viet Nam is a single country, and the situation "is more complicated than can be explained on that basis," he said. "Before 1954, I don't believe you can say that there honestly was a country of Viet Nam," and unification is still problematical because there are racial differences between North and South.

"There isn't a terribly great feeling of unity or of nationalism among these people," he said.

Mr. Kirkpatrick also challenges the notion that aggression did not occur against South Viet Nam.

The Viet Cong infiltrated from the north, he said, and "were killing several thousand South Vietnamese officials and technicians and school teachers every year" before U.S. troops were committed to battle. "If that isn't aggression, then I don't know what is," Mr. Kirkpatrick said. "Of course, if there are going to be discussions for a settlement, the Viet Cong should be represented — but Hanoi insists that the Viet Cong be the only representatives from South Viet Nam."

Critics also complain that this country has supported governments that are undemocratic, Mr. Kirkpatrick noted. But he believes that they "don't give proper consideration to the fact that Washington has earnestly tried to help the Vietnamese find leaders who could lead the country and who represented the country at the same time."

"It's a case of our government being damned if it does, and damned if it doesn't," he said.